



Navajo Nation mourns passing of US Army Private Carlton L. Chee, urge thorough investigation of Fort Hood soldier deaths

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PHOTO: Pvt. Carlton L. Chee, 25, was a member of the Navajo Nation from Ramah Pine Hill, New Mexico.

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. — The Navajo Nation Council was notified Friday of the death of US Army Private Carlton L. Chee, 25, of Pine Hill, New Mexico, after collapsing during a training exercise at the Fort Hood Army post in Texas.

“Our hearts are heavy today with the news of Private Carlton Chee’s passing,” said Navajo Nation Council Delegate Jamie Henio (Alamo, Ramah, Tohajiilee). “Our young Navajos continue to serve at the highest rates per capita in the country, and when we lose just one of our honorable warriors, the entire Nation feels that pain.”

Chee was a member of the Navajo Nation and a 2015 graduate of Pine Hill High School. He was noted by school officials for his participation in football, basketball, and track and field throughout his high school career.

Council Delegate Daniel E. Tso (Littlewater, Pueblo Pintado, Torreon, Whitehorse Lake, Baca/Brewitt, Casamero Lake, Ojo Encino, Counselor), chairman of the Health, Education, and Human Services Committee, said, “The Navajo Nation Council honors Private Chee for his desire to serve and protect his fellow countrymen and his country. We pray for the Chee family and extended relatives. May we all join in prayer for all our servicemen and women.”

Chee was assigned in July to the 2nd Battalion, 12th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Armored Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division. He entered the Army in February as a tank crewman.

The Associated Press reported that Pvt. Chee's death is one of 28 to occur at the Fort Hood U.S. Army post this year. The Army has stated it will launch an overall investigation into the management of the post, along with a more detailed investigation into previous cases.

"We are deeply disturbed by the string of deaths at Fort Hood, and if there is any malfeasance or negligence involved, the Navajo Nation calls on our national leaders to pursue every available avenue to protect the lives of our Navajo warriors and those serving in the U.S. Armed Forces," said Speaker Seth Damon (Baahaali, Chilchiltah, Manuelito, Red Rock, Rock Springs, Tsayatoh). "Our young Navajo warriors who choose to continue the valorous legacy shared by our Navajo Code Talkers deserve the greatest assurances from our military leaders that their service is not in vain."

Chee's awards include the National Defense Service Medal and the Army Service Ribbon.

The Navajo Nation Council is the governing body of the Navajo Nation and is comprised of 24 council delegates representing 110 local Navajo communities, including the Ramah Pine Hill Chapter. Memorials of the Navajo Nation Council are issued by the Speaker of the Navajo Nation Council.

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